

(4) The Federal Rules of Evidence do not directly apply to the hearing, but may be used as guidance by the ALJ and the parties in interpreting and applying the provisions of this section.

(b) *Objections.* Any party objecting to the admission or exclusion of evidence must concisely state the grounds. A ruling on every objection must appear in the record.

**§ 45.56 What are the requirements for transcription of the hearing?**

(a) *Transcript and reporter's fees.* The hearing will be transcribed verbatim.

(1) The Hearings Division will secure the services of a reporter and pay the reporter's fees to provide an original transcript to the Hearings Division on an expedited basis.

(2) Each party must pay the reporter for any copies of the transcript obtained by that party.

(b) *Transcript Corrections.* (1) Any party may file a motion proposing corrections to the transcript. The motion must be filed within 5 days after receipt of the transcript, unless the ALJ sets a different deadline.

(2) Unless a party files a timely motion under paragraph (b)(1) of this section, the transcript will be presumed to be correct and complete, except for obvious typographical errors.

(3) As soon as practicable after the close of the hearing and after consideration of any motions filed under paragraph (b)(1) of this section, the ALJ will issue an order making any corrections to the transcript that the ALJ finds are warranted.

**§ 45.57 Who has the burden of persuasion, and what standard of proof applies?**

(a) Any party who has filed a request for a hearing has the burden of persuasion with respect to the issues of material fact raised by that party.

(b) The standard of proof is a preponderance of the evidence.

**§ 45.58 When will the hearing record close?**

(a) The hearing record will close when the ALJ closes the hearing, unless he or she directs otherwise.

(b) Evidence may not be added after the hearing record is closed, but the

transcript may be corrected under § 45.56(b).

**§ 45.59 What are the requirements for post-hearing briefs?**

(a) *General.* (1) Each party may file a post-hearing brief within 15 days after the close of the hearing.

(2) A party may file a reply brief only if requested by the ALJ. The deadline for filing a reply brief, if any, will be set by the ALJ.

(3) The ALJ may limit the length of the briefs to be filed under this section.

(b) *Content.* (1) An initial brief must include:

(i) A concise statement of the case;

(ii) A separate section containing proposed findings regarding the issues of material fact, with supporting citations to the hearing record;

(iii) Arguments in support of the party's position; and

(iv) Any other matter required by the ALJ.

(2) A reply brief, if requested by the ALJ, must be limited to any issues identified by the ALJ.

(c) *Form.* (1) An exhibit admitted in evidence or marked for identification in the record may not be reproduced in the brief.

(i) Such an exhibit may be reproduced, within reasonable limits, in an appendix to the brief.

(ii) Any pertinent analysis of an exhibit may be included in a brief.

(2) If a brief exceeds 20 pages, it must contain:

(i) A table of contents and of points made, with page references; and

(ii) An alphabetical list of citations to legal authority, with page references.

**§ 45.60 What are the requirements for the ALJ's decision?**

(a) *Timing.* The ALJ must issue a decision within the shorter of the following time periods:

(1) 30 days after the close of the hearing under § 45.58; or

(2) 120 days after the effective date stated in the referral notice under § 45.26(c)(4), 7 CFR 1.626(c)(4), or 50 CFR 221.26(c)(4).

(b) *Content.* (1) The decision must contain: